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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN FARM FORESTRY

A radio talk By W. R. Mattoon, Forest Service, broadcast in the Land Grant College radio program, National Farm and Home Hour, Wednesday, August 15, 1934.

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One of the most significant trends in farm forestry is the timber marketing information being made available to farmers through County Agents and State forestry agencies. The information consists mainly of current prices and markets for different grades of timber products, such as lumber, crossties, piling and pulpwood. There are aesthetic and recreational values in farmwoods but primarily the farmer is interested from a dollars and cents standpoint. Reliable information shows that even during the depression many farmers have been able to draw upon their farmwoods for a substantial part of their net cash incomes. After all, it is the difference between the money received and the cost of growing a crop, or the net income, that counts.

Woodland culture continues to be a leading extension forestry project. It pays to thin dense stands of trees, as it pays to thin corn or cotton. Diseased, crippled and inferior kinds of trees should be cut and used for fuelwood, giving the growing space to the straight, thrifty and more valuable trees.

Another economic forestry practice, especially during slack time in winter, is the pruning of side branches from young tree trunks so as to make a clear 16-foot length. Formerly practiced by farmers only in New England on white pine, because it pays, the practice is spreading widely over the eastern half of the United States. Most surprising of all, it includes the Southern States with their vast amounts of young yellow pines. Speaking of the South, in the region of longleaf and slash pines from South Carolina and Georgia west to Texas, farmers have begun to work or chip their trees for crude turpentine or gum. Five years ago no farmers were doing this, but they were leasing their timber to turpentine operators for a fraction of its worth. When the farmer collects as much as two or three barrels of gum he hauls them in his wagon or truck to a still and is paid cash for his product. Modern methods of working or chipping pine trees, based on experiments by the Forest Service, make it possible to work the same tree for 10 to 20 years-or-more instead of only 3, as by old-time wasteful methods.

Much land, thrown out of cultivation, is being sown to pasture or planted with pines, spruces, or other kinds of trees. Records now available by the Forest Service, show that in 1933 farmers planted an aggregate of 23,600 acres with a total of 22 million young forest trees. These were mostly obtained at nominal cost from State forest nurseries. Leading States are Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, Tennessee, Georgia, Nebraska and the Territory of Puerto Rico. The trees are being planted for timber production, or, in the prairie and Great Plains States, for windbreaks and shelterbelts. Many States have literature, available upon request, on how, when and what to plant for all these purposes. Tree belts on farm-

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steads afford protection for man, livestock, gardens and field crops. The prevailing drought and the recent Federal drought relief are serving to focus nation-wide attention on the proven value of trees for modifying local climatic conditions.

You have recently heard about the extensive planting of trees on farms to check soil erosion and control floods. Observing the work of the CCC boys this past spring in planting 40 million trees for this purpose in the Central Mississippi River watershed, many farmers who for years have been throwing brush, cornstalks, straw, and even old automobile bodies in their gullies to no avail, are making a start for themselves in healing their gullies by means of revegetating their surfaces by planting trees, vines or grasses.

In all these forestry activities the 4-H Club boys and girls are taking a prominent place, with a total in 1933 of 15,170 forestry club members.

In closing: The time seems to be here when a fair is not a fair unless it includes a tree or log chopping contest. For example, in Western Massachusetts the State Extension Forester is about to pull off a series of chopping contests with prizes for the winners and a grand prize for the regional champion.

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